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November 10, 2020

Ashley Clark  
Director of Community and Economic Development  
TOWN OF WALPOLE  
135 School Street  
Walpole, MA 02081

Re: Fee Proposal for 55 Summer Peer Review Services

Dear Ashley:

I'm writing to provide you with a Peer Review Report in accordance with my proposal submitted to you dated February 20, 2020. I presented to the ZBA last Thursday, November 5. That report was based on an annotated memo dated November 4 (original memo was issued on August 13, 2020). The point of this memo is to provide some additional comments that you, as well as to provide a few comments bases on new materials that I received yesterday morning. This letter is organized in the same format as my fee proposal from February.

- 1. Review the developer's application, plans and drawings, reports from other peer reviewers and Town officials, letters from neighboring residents, etc. The following materials have been reviewed (comments on documents are within subsequent sections of the report):**

Presentation Plan (rendered overall site plan) prepared by Howard Stein Hudson dated 10/14/20.  
Proposed Subdivision/Overall Plan with annotations prepared by Howard Stein Hudson dated 10/14/20  
Cedar Crossing/Cedar Edge Overhead View prepared by Mangel Architects dated 20 October 2020  
Cedar Crossing/Cedar Edge Entry View prepared by Mangel Architects dated 20 October 2020  
Cedar Crossing/Cedar Edge Multi Family (rendered building elevations) prepared by Mangel Architects dated 20 October 2020.  
Cedar Edge Model G Plans & Elevations prepared by HPA Design, Inc. dated October 16, 2020.  
Cedar Edge Model F Plans & Elevations prepared by HPA Design, Inc. dated October 16, 2020.  
Cedar Crossing Multi-Family Building 1 drawing set (12 sheets) prepared by Mangel Architects dated 10/20/2020.  
Cedar Crossing Multi-Family Building 2 drawing set (11 sheets) prepared by Mangel Architects dated 10/20/2020.  
Cover letter to ZBA from David Hale dated September 15, 2020 (with numerous attachments, including a response to my peer review memo from August 13, 2020).  
Cover letter to ZBA from David Hale dated October 21, 2020 (attachments included drawings noted above).  
Memo to David Hale from Bayside Engineering dated September 28, 2020.  
Memo to David Hale from Bayside Engineering dated October 16, 2020.

**Materials received today, November 9, 2020:**

Applicant responses dated 11/9/20 to Davis Square annotated memo dated November 4, 2020.  
Applicant responses dated 11/9/20 to Walpole Police Department letter (original letter dated 10/30/2020).  
Applicant response to Walpole Department of Public Works memo dated November 2, 2020 (response is provided by Bayside Engineering, civil engineering consultant to the Applicant).

- 2. Participate in an initial meeting at the site with the developer's design team and a representative of the Town**  
The initial (and only) meeting at the site with the developer's and his civil engineer, as well as with Ashley occurred on May 22, 2020.

- 3. Conduct site visit and reconnaissance assessment of surrounding residential and nonresidential areas within 1/2 mile of the project site.**

Within 1/2 mile of the site, to the northwest along Washington Street, swinging around to due west of the site, there is virtually no residential or commercial development. Most of the residential development is in a triangle from due west to south west.

From that point in the southwest, to due south is parking for Gillette Stadium and Route 1. Along Route 1 to the northeast is roadside commercial development, with a small section of residential development to the southeast on, and immediately off of North Street. Development within this ½ mile radius circle also includes the Boyden School, a cemetery, as well as a church.

All of the existing residential appears to be small scale, single family homes. There does not appear to be any multi-family residential development close to the scale of the proposed plan. The proposed development includes 5 single family homes near the site entry on Summer Street. While the structures themselves are of a similar scale to the existing residential pattern of development, they are placed very close to each other relative to other homes in the area. Once within the proposed development, the streetscape is unlike nearby development, either because of the type and scale of multifamily buildings, or because the smaller homes are much closer to each other.

**4. Consult with the Applicant's design team, as appropriate.**

There was a working session held with the applicant's team, as well as town staff and one ZBA member held on August 12, 2020.

**5. Provide an initial oral presentation to the ZBA. Said presentation typically includes comments and preliminary recommendations on the following (the presentation occurred on November 5, 2020, which was based on the November 4 annotated memo prepared by this peer reviewer):**

- a. Orientation of building in relation to parking areas, open space and on-site amenities There has been significant progress from the previous plans. This has been made possible by the consolidation of most of the rental units into two 6-story buildings with reduced footprints. This fact, combined with parking located under both buildings has opened up more unbuilt site area. In the large buildings, many of the apartments now have views out over significant open undeveloped space. However, it is this reviewer's opinion that the multi-family buildings are still too close to the parking lots, providing inadequate space for any meaningful landscape buffer. This condition is worsened by the fact that there appears to be no landscaping planned for within or along the large parking fields (one of which appears to be approximately 500 feet long). In the single-family area of the site, improvements relative to open space were made by converting 14 single-family's into 7 two-family homes. Most of these homes back up against open space (which provides an opportunity for rear yards), but a number of the proposed structures are either looking directly across to multifamily structures approximately 50 feet away, or are backed up to infiltration ponds. So not unlike the situation at the two large multifamily buildings, the site plan would benefit from more open space.
- b. Function, use and adequacy of open space and landscaped areas. As noted above and in previous memos, this reviewer believes that areas available for landscaping are not adequate, either along or within parking areas, lining driveways, screening of ground floor residential units, etc. In addition, while the organization of the site plan (particularly in the multi-family area) has improved through the consolidation of units into fewer, taller buildings and the provision of a shared open space, the shared space does not appear to be large enough given the number of units who will utilize it. This reviewer believes that the placement of the clubhouse in the main green area makes sense, however, as currently designed, the building and swimming pool leave little space for other activities.
- c. Use and treatment of natural resources. Presumably, while clearcutting will be necessary in much of the site, the presence of the wetland buffers will ensure the survival of mature trees. Apparently, there reportedly a trail within an area that will remain intact that may be used by residents "at their own risk."
- d. Building design, setbacks, massing and scale in relationship to the surrounding context and topography. As discussed above, the proposed development does not resemble the existing residential pattern of development in the nearby area. Rather than an extension or enhancement of existing development, it is proposed to be more of a campus setting with its own building types and streetscapes. As such, it creates its own context, and is of an adequate scale to constitute a small neighborhood. It is for this reason that when assessing impact of the development, there are two critical factors that must be looked at. First, is the internal "campus" setting one that is well-designed so as to ensure its desirability and long-term sustainability? And second, given the scale of the project, is the infrastructure outside of the development adequate to avoid significant negative impact? A well designed, inviting new neighborhood, supported by adequate infrastructure that serves it, will likely be a place that will become well integrated into the town at large.
- e. Views of the project visible from the public street, public areas and from the vantage point of nearby residential neighborhoods. The only part of the development that will be visible from Summer Street are the five homes very near the entry drive. It is likely that one existing home will be impacted by the western-most section of the project. This reviewer has made the case for developing a 3-D model of the entire development

that will make it possible to study its internal quality. This is particularly important given the variety of scale and type of buildings that are proposed that all must be knit into a coherent streetscape.

- f. Pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation; adequacy of accessibility provisions. Of particular interest are the implications of access and egress in terms of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Adequacy of parking facilities. Vehicular circulation appears to be adequately accommodated (however, it is important to refer to the civil engineering peer review). On the other hand, only minimal accommodations have been made for pedestrians, and no apparent designated circulation for bikes. See previous memos for more information. Adequacy of parking is beyond the scope of this review, however, the quality of the parking areas themselves, for reasons noted elsewhere, is insufficient.
- g. Integration of building and site, including but not limited to preservation of existing tree cover, if any. It appears that much of the existing tree cover within the wetlands will be retained. Developed areas will have to be cleared, and there is no landscape plan that describes what is proposed. From the submitted materials, it is not possible to review how well the buildings are integrated into the site.
- h. Exterior materials. Not known from submitted materials.
- i. Energy efficiency. Not known from submitted materials
- j. Exterior lighting. Not known from submitted materials
- k. Proposed landscape elements, planting materials, and planting design. Not known from submitted materials
- l. Feasibility of incorporating environmental and energy performance standards in the design, construction and operation of the buildings. All new construction has many options for exceeding sustainability standards that are incorporated in the Massachusetts Building Code. This reviewer is not aware of any enhanced measures that are under consideration.
- m. Any other design-related considerations identified by me, ZBA, staff or working group. The primary issue of concern for this reviewer, given the materials that have been reviewed to date, continues to be inadequate space on the site to develop sufficient usable outdoor space, along with other landscaping that provides buffering, diminishes heat island, etc. Drawings for all of the proposed buildings are at a schematic level, which limits our ability to provide useful commentary.
- n. Techniques to mitigate visual impact. See notes above regarding the isolation of this development from the existing neighborhood. Within the development, additional space between the structures, particularly the one and two family homes, would diminish visual and other impacts. Further development of the large rental buildings should study more articulation of the building footprints that would mitigate the scale of the structures.

In addition to the comments above and those included in previous memos, as the drawings are potentially further developed, the following questions should be considered:

- What are the locations/types/plans of the required 15 Group 2 fully accessible units? Note that all units in elevator-fed buildings must at a minimum, be Group 1 units, as well as all ground-floor units in non-elevator fed buildings. Home ownership units in multi-family buildings are not exempt from Group 1 requirements.
- Where is there bicycle parking?
- Is there a narrative describing how trash will be handled on the site?
- Has the developer drafted a Construction Management Plan that describes impact to the community and to the surrounding wetlands?
- Does the Fire Department have any issues with access to the buildings, particularly the 6-story rental structures with parking all along their front facades? Or issues that should be addressed in the parking beneath the structures?

I hope you will let me know if you have any questions about this proposal.

Sincerely,  
DAVIS SQUARE ARCHITECTS, INC



Clifford Boehmer AIA  
President + Principal